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OIR Contribution to SE-38

"Soviet Capabilities and Probable Courses of Action in Electromagnetic Warfare"

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OIR Contribution to SE-38

"Soviet Capabilities and Probable Courses of Action in Electromagnetic Warfare"

V. PROBABLE COURSES OF ACTION

A. Soviet Objectives in ELECTROMAGNETIC WARFARE

1. The primary Soviet objective in electromagnetic warfare so far revealed under present cold war conditions is the isolation of the Soviet and Satellites peoples from Western radio broadcasts directed at them. While the Kremlin may see certain auxillary benefits in its present extensive jamming program -- for example, accumulation of a useful reservoir of equipment, trained personnel, and manufacturing capacity, for possible use in a hot war, for instance, or for subsequent expansion of domestic communications -- the motive of isolation is ~~probably~~ ^{UNDoubtedly} the overriding one at present.

In one isolated instance of jamming of a Western domestic broadcast (Denmark, January 30, 1953), the USSR revealed the possible additional objective of preventing individually selected Western domestic broadcasts from reaching their intended audience.

2. ~~There~~ There is as yet no conclusive evidence of Soviet intent to pursue other objectives by means of electromagnetic warfare, although measures within Soviet electromagnetic capabilities could be used for a variety of specific cold-war objectives furthering the over-all Soviet purpose of undermining Western unity, stability, and strength. While present cold-war conditions appear to impose a number of political restraints on full-scale electromagnetic warfare, selective use of such measures is entirely possible and even likely under present conditions.

3. In the event of general war, the Kremlin's primary objective would almost certainly become the maximum possible disruption of Western military communications and navigational aids. While the desire to maintain the isolation of its peoples would undoubtedly remain and indeed become stronger, some or most of the equipment now used for jamming Western propaganda broadcasts might well be freed for other uses and the Kremlin might resort to other means of attaining this objective, such as confiscation of radio receivers and attempts to damage or destroy Western transmitters by military action or sabotage.

B. Possible Courses of Action

4. Present Soviet strategy in electromagnetic warfare relies principally on the use of an extensive jamming system, supplemented by propaganda designed to discredit the sources of Western broadcasts and to intimidate potential listeners within the Soviet Bloc. Extensive use of wire-diffusion systems also contributes to the reduction of the potential Soviet Bloc audience of Western broadcasts, but it is likely that such systems would be widely used even though no Western broadcasts were beamed specifically at the Soviet and Satellite population.

5. The Kremlin has open to it numerous additional courses of action either in pursuit of its established aim of isolating the Soviet and Satellite peoples or as part of a cold war offensive independent of that aim. Some of these measures are unlikely under foreseeable circumstances short of general war. However, the lack of evidence indicating Soviet recourse to certain measures does not necessarily mean that these courses of action will not be or, in some cases, have not been adopted. In any case, whether or not the Kremlin refrains from such action in the

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future for political reasons, fear of retaliation, or other adverse consequences, it has the economic and technical capability for pursuing them during the period of this estimate.

6. Thus, in its attempts to shield the Soviet Bloc peoples from Western broadcasts aimed at them, the Kremlin could drastically reduce the number of receivers in the Bloc capable of receiving Western broadcasts by measures ranging from restrictive controls on ownership and operation of such sets through reduction of manufacture of the sets and of replacement parts to outright confiscation. It could supplement present intimidating propaganda by more direct controls on listeners and overt police action. It could, by diplomatic pressure, attempt to induce countries where US transmitters or relay stations are to be built not to permit such construction. In the event of construction of such installations in certain areas it could attempt to destroy or damage them by sabotage or incitement to mob violence.

7. The Kremlin could further extend its retaliatory action to Western facilities other than those directly employed in broadcasting to the Soviet Union, if it believed that such action offered significant prospects of success in persuading or forcing the West to cease efforts to reach the Soviet and Satellite peoples by radio. It has already jammed one domestic Western broadcast (Denmark, January 30, 1953), although the motive in this case appears to have been unusually violent objection to the content of the individual broadcast rather than retaliation for Western broadcasts to the USSR. The Kremlin

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undoubtedly has the capability of repeating such action on a wider scale, and in addition of interfering with, if not of completely disrupting, Western civil and military radio communications and navigational aids.

8. Soviet leaders could also use measures such as those just noted in a cold war offensive to serve their purposes other than the countering of Western broadcasts to the USSR. Thus, jamming of Western domestic broadcasts and radio communications or navigational aids, even though ostensibly in retaliation for Western broadcasts to the USSR, might actually be taken with the aim of causing dissension among Western nations by encouraging the belief that the resulting inconveniences were simply the consequences of attempts by some nations, especially the US, to interfere in Soviet internal affairs by propagandizing the Soviet people. Similarly, interference with air navigational aids might be used in support of specific cold war efforts -- e.g. to mislead Western aircraft for such purposes as interference with a future Berlin airlift or the deliberate creation of air incidents involving Western violation of Soviet-controlled airspace which might be used to political advantage.

9. As a part of a cold war offensive, the USSR could supplement the measures already outlined by considerable use of "gray" or "black" propaganda, disseminated by radio as well as other means. Practices at least bordering on gray propaganda have already appeared in the use of quasi-clandestine broadcasts, not ostensibly Soviet, which give the impression of originating in the areas to which they are directed.

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Such areas have so far been Iranian Azerbaidzhan, France, Italy, and Spain. A related tactic, also possible under either cold or hot war conditions, would be the interspersion of false or misleading items on frequencies actually employed for bona fide Western domestic broadcasts or communications.

10. All of the above measures could be used by the USSR in the event of general war. The principal change in that event would not be in Soviet gross capabilities for waging electromagnetic warfare, but rather in the elimination of political restraints on the choice and intensity of employment of these measures.

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C. Likelihood of Increased Preventive Internal Action

11. The Kremlin's primary objective in electromagnetic warfare under prevailing cold war conditions can be realized by three types of preventive internal action: (a) jamming Western broadcasts beamed to the Bloc, (b) reducing the number of radio receivers owned by Soviet and Satellite people, and (c) exercising tighter control over radio listeners in the Bloc. These courses of action presuppose that the continued insulation of the Soviet and Satellite people is sufficiently important to warrant the effort required to carry them out.

12. There is an important segment of the Soviet population which is potentially receptive to contacts from abroad. 1/ While it is impossible to estimate the size of this group, its existence is attested by defectors and by the action taken by the Soviet government to cut off the population from uncontrolled contact with the non-Communist world. Since the radio is the most effective method now being used to reach the Soviet people, the Kremlin fears it as an instrument inciting defection and encouraging

1/ Most of this potential audience probably does not have access to foreign programs, but there are a number of listeners who do. Some of the German engineers, forcibly removed to the Soviet Union after the war and recently repatriated, have reported that listening to foreign broadcasts was practiced fairly widely among certain sections of the Soviet population, particularly among their Russian colleagues. A large proportion of the privately owned radio sets in the USSR are probably owned by persons in the upper levels of Soviet society, of whom many are Party members, and who have too much of a stake in the Soviet system to represent a threat to the regime. Their interest, however, even if it is completely non-political and is based more on curiosity or search for entertainment than on any form of disaffection, represents a danger to the Soviet regime, which is dependent for security on monolithic control of all sources of information. Even if the listeners reject the contents of the broadcasts, the fact that they are interested enough to listen means that they are potential channels for criticism of particular aspects of Soviet society. Reports of the broadcasts are undoubtedly spread by word of mouth and reach a larger audience than the number of radio receivers indicates.

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the formation of anti-Soviet attitudes. The Communist regime will undoubtedly continue to produce disaffected citizens. The Kremlin will therefore remain sensitive to foreign contacts which are suspected of channeling discontent against the regime itself and possibly inspiring some form of subversive action.

Jamming Western Broadcasts Beamed to the Bloc

13. Jamming accomplishes the Kremlin's primary objective and could be readily extended. It is, however, an irritating method of censorship, comparable to tearing pages out of books or blacking out printed material. The most effective controls are those which leave no trace of what has been censored or excluded. This disadvantage has not been sufficiently important to cause the Kremlin to rely primarily on other methods of insulating the people of the Bloc, but it might have deterred Moscow from exercising its jamming capability more extensively.

14. While jamming is an effective method of preventing some Western broadcasts from reaching virtually all potential listeners in the Bloc and practically all Western broadcasts from reaching selected areas of the Bloc, it is not as completely effective as denying the population access to short wave receivers. The USSR has taken various steps to reduce the availability of short wave sets and to expand the radio services available to owners of medium-wave, long-wave, and wired receivers. However, complete denial of radio sets capable of receiving Western broadcasts would be exceedingly difficult to achieve and would deprive the Kremlin of the advantages of its own short-wave domestic broadcasting. It is believed that jamming will continue to be used as the principal method of controlling radio listening within the Bloc, ^{even though} ~~but~~ the use of other methods

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of insulating the people from Western broadcasts might increase in relative importance.

15. There are no present indications of Soviet intent to increase its jamming effort substantially, but the magnitude of its effort during the next two years would depend on the scale and intensity of Western programs.

Reducing the Number of Radio Receivers

16. Although the radio broadcasting network has increased tremendously in the postwar period and the number of radio receivers in the hands of the people is approximately four times greater than in 1946, the production of short-wave receivers for private individuals has not increased proportionately and probably has declined since 1950. 1/ The desirability of short-wave sets may have been somewhat reduced by increased availability of standardized sets, sold at a much lower price, which are capable of receiving long wave broadcasts only. Moreover, facilities have been increasing steadily to accommodate long-wave sets in population centers throughout the Soviet Union. There has also been reportedly some manufacture of fixed-tuned radio sets which give the listener no opportunity to try the wave lengths between the two or three stations to which the receiver has been set.

1/ There have been some complaints that spare radio parts are unavailable in certain localities, but there is no evidence that there has been a systematic campaign to create a scarcity of key replacements. It is possible that in the future, either as part of a deliberate policy to reduce the number of short-wave receivers in the hands of the public or as a result of military requirements, replacements will be sharply reduced or will disappear completely from the market. Since the government controls all aspects of radio production it can create an artificial scarcity of key parts. On the other hand, some owners of short-wave sets may be amateur radio operators and have considerable knowledge of the field. Through exchanging radio parts and tuning in other stations we are able to keep some sets in operation long after replacements have disappeared from the market.

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17. The Kremlin has also placed considerable stress on group listening as a method of securing the population from foreign contact. It is believed that most of the better all-wave receivers are placed at group listening points.

18. The expansion of the wired receiver set has been more extensive than that of individual sets. In the USSR a majority of the radio audience listens to simple loud speakers wired into a receiving relay station, which transmits or relays to the loud speakers attached to it only those programs desired by the authorities. Such loud speakers are located in houses and apartments, clubs, factories, farms, parks, trains, ships, public squares, and on street corners. Through this system the Soviet government can reach large sections of the population in time of emergency. The relatively low cost of installing and licensing wired receivers make them attractive to people of restricted income; it is now estimated that there are approximately twice as many of these receivers as radio sets in civilian hands. To enhance the appeal of wired receivers, there have reportedly been efforts to make wired receivers which can be tuned to two or three stations, allowing the listener some choice in program.

19. Under present conditions it will probably not be necessary for the USSR to increase its non-confiscatory efforts in the next two years. Although the owners of radio sets are increasing in number, the number of civilians who can tune to stations outside the Soviet Bloc will remain comparatively small.

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Controls on Radio Listeners)

20. The USSR has not resorted to confiscation as a method of controlling radio listening since the German invasion in 1941, when all sets were confiscated. Under present conditions there is no reason to believe that the government will confiscate short-wave receivers in civilian hands; but if a full scale war breaks out, the Kremlin might well resort to this measure. This would not materially affect the ability of the government to reach the population, most of which has access to the extensive wired network and public address system or to radio sets incapable of receiving foreign broadcasts.

21. All radio sets require a license for legal operation within the Soviet Union. 1/ Although the cost of a license may limit the purchase of sets to some extent, it has not as yet been used as a method of prohibiting the use of radio sets. To a certain extent, however, the purchase of a license places a check on the owner and it would facilitate confiscation if such a policy were adopted. In any case, the listener is probably somewhat discouraged from listening to anti-Soviet broadcasts by the knowledge that his name is filed as the owner of a radio set and that the police and other officials have ready access to this fact.

22. At present there is no legal prohibition against listening to foreign broadcasts. In March 1951, however, the USSR Supreme Soviet promulgated the Law for the Defense of Peace, according to which "war propaganda, in whatever form it is conducted," is labelled

1/ These licenses usually cost 36 rubles for individually owned sets and 75 rubles for those owned by institutions. They must be reviewed every six months after the set is acquired, whether or not it is in operating condition. Discovery of an unregistered set carries a fine of 100 rubles.

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a crime against humanity and "persons guilty of war propaganda should be arraigned and tried as major criminals." (Izvestiya, March 13, 1951.) Since some statements by non-Soviet radio stations might fall into the category of "war propaganda," any persons passing on to his neighbors information heared on these broadcasts may be subject to prosecution. There is as yet no evidence that the law has been deliberately used to eliminate listening to foreign broadcasts, but it is a potential threat.

23. Among the most important measures taken to restrict listening to foreign broadcasts is the intense campaign conducted by all the state-operated media to disparage non-Soviet sources of information. References to the VOA and other broadcasts from abroad appear regularly in the press and on the domestic radio, 2/ although there is apparently at present no organized campaign to refute all specific allegations made by foreign propagandists over the radio. By repeating stereotyped allegations about the Voice of America, which Soviet authorities describe

2/ There have been constant references to the VOA and other foreign radio broadcasts in Soviet media. A study of references to VOA indicated that VOA was mentioned on an average of 39 times a month in 1950 and 36 times a month during the first 9 months of 1952; while there are fluctuations from month to month, the over-all number of references remains fairly constant. In recent years there has been a tendency to reduce the number of specific references to VOA broadcasts and increase the number of the general and diffuse criticisms designed to impugn the reliability of the source itself. In refuting specific Western broadcasts, Soviet propagandists tend to concentrate on information about the United States and Western institutions. These references cannot be considered an accurate index of the effectiveness of foreign broadcasts in reaching Soviet citizens, but they do indicate that there is continued official concern about information from non-Soviet sources.

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as controlled by Wall Street and representing the interests of American imperialism, the Kremlin expects to counteract the impact of foreign broadcasters. By attacking the sources of foreign broadcasts, Soviet propagandists also intimidate listeners. Because of the pressure of the centrally controlled propaganda media the listener probably feels increasingly insecure while listening to foreign broadcasts. As the Soviet audience becomes increasingly isolated from the rest of the world, it must be more and more conscious that foreign contacts are forbidden implicitly if not explicitly. If attacks by foreign broadcasts on Soviet institutions become more intense, fear of apprehension while listening to foreign broadcasts will probably increase proportionately.

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D. Likelihood of Soviet Direct Retaliatory Action

Interference with Operations of Western Transmitters

24. No significant Soviet efforts have yet been made at direct interference (i.e., destruction or damage) with the operation of transmitters used for broadcasts to the Soviet Bloc by VOA, BBC, etc., including the vagabonds. However, Soviet propaganda attacks on construction of additional such transmitters at points around the Soviet perimeter, taken against the background of Soviet diplomatic and other pressures exerted on peripheral countries in somewhat related matters (provisions of bases to the US, presence of US military and other special missions, and, in general, any American activity in the vicinity of Soviet frontiers), undoubtedly serves as a strong deterrent to permission by such nations for the construction of transmitters on their territory. Known Soviet attitudes on this question were probably a significant factor, for instance, in Iran's decision to cease relaying VOA broadcasts even to its own people.

25. The USSR will undoubtedly attempt wherever feasible to exert pressures of this sort, including strongly worded diplomatic protests and threatening propaganda, on nations whose territory may be desired for such transmitters. It is believed that this course of action would be adopted to delay completion of the installations under the Ring-plan, as well as in any case where the Kremlin feels that Western transmitters seriously threaten to penetrate Soviet jamming or greatly increase the difficulty and expense of its jamming effort.

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26. It is further entirely possible that the USSR will resort to efforts aimed at destroying or damaging transmitters in the event of marked Western success in nullifying the effects of Soviet jamming. However, so long as the Kremlin continues to find a pose of peaceful reasonableness useful in pursuit of its overall aims, political factors will tend to impose some restraint on such measures. On the established pattern of Soviet action against foreign aircraft, fishing boats, etc. the USSR might nevertheless attempt to destroy or seize the "vagabonds" under appropriate circumstances, even though the probable official "justification" -- violation of Soviet territorial waters -- would carry little weight with world public opinion. In the event of construction of transmitters in territories where it is felt that Communist capabilities were sufficient, the Kremlin might well attempt to destroy or damage such facilities by incitement to mob violence. The use of direct sabotage is less likely so long as the USSR seeks to maintain a pose of reasonableness and would probably appear only in conjunction with a marked intensification of the cold war or conceivably an exceedingly serious failure of Soviet jamming efforts to counteract Western radio penetration. Under most circumstances in the cold war, the Kremlin would probably exhaust all other possible means before resorting to outright sabotage and would endeavor at all costs to avoid association with such action. Under hot war conditions, the USSR would undoubtedly resort to sabotage or any other method within its capacity which offered prospects of success commensurate with the effort involved.

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Soviet Jamming of Western Domestic Broadcasting

27. The only indication of Soviet intent to jam domestic broadcasts of Western nations is the single instance of jamming of a Danish broadcast on January 30, 1953 already cited. The circumstances under which the incident occurred (following a protest in advance of a scheduled broadcast in which Stalin was portrayed by a Danish actor) would suggest as the motive Soviet hypersensitivity to "irreverent" treatment of Stalin, though Denmark was at the time the object of other Soviet pressures directed against allowing the stationing of NATO forces on Danish territory. Conceivably, however, the incident might have been manufactured as the pretext for testing jamming techniques (to be used later on a larger scale) in a way which would arouse less Western suspicion or possible reaction than might have resulted from a completely unexplained and arbitrary instance of jamming. While the Danish case indicates Soviet willingness to jam Western domestic broadcasts in appropriate circumstances, there is no conclusive evidence of Soviet intent to resort to such action on a large scale.

28. Should the Kremlin decide to initiate jamming of Western domestic broadcasts on a large scale as a measure of retaliation designed primarily to persuade or coerce the West to cease broadcasts to the Soviet and satellite peoples, it would probably attempt to make the connection between Western action and Soviet reaction as explicit as possible and to build up a "legal" case of maximum plausibility for its action. To this end it might most logically take as a pretext some intensification of Western broadcasting such as substantial progress

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in implementing the Ring-plan. It might then formally charge that Western broadcasts were interfering with its own domestic broadcasts before or immediately following any jamming of Western broadcasts, in an effort to minimize the likelihood/the West's estimating that Soviet action represented the beginning of all-out electromagnetic warfare and possible resultant large-scale retaliation. However, adoption of such a course of action would presumably mean that the Kremlin felt its capabilities for all-out electromagnetic warfare were good vis-a-vis Western capabilities for retaliation. Western protests would not deter the Kremlin from exercising these capabilities for this purpose and would probably be taken as an opportunity to present the Soviet case explicitly in reply.

Other Retaliatory Action

29. The Kremlin might conceivably attempt to jam regular Western civil radio communications circuits on a pretext similar to the one outlined above for jamming Western domestic broadcasts. In the absence of a decision to embark on large-scale electromagnetic warfare or of some specific cold war aim — e.g. isolation of West Berlin — any such interference not specifically represented as retaliation for some specific Western action appears highly unlikely. Interference with military communications networks or cable transmission, whether overland or submarine, would also be unlikely as a measure in retaliation for Western broadcasts to the Bloc.

30. In general, the Kremlin might feel that any measure which could plausibly be represented as a retaliation for specific Western and especially US action might offer the advantages: (1) of possibly

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inducing the West to cease or curtail broadcasts to the Bloc; or
(2) promoting dissension in the Western camp by encouraging the belief
in areas most inconvenienced that US action was the primary cause of
the difficulties. The primary disadvantages which might be expected
in using such measures solely as retaliation for Western broadcasts would
be increased likelihood of adverse political effects in the form of
resentment toward the USSR, and of Western retaliation. These/advantages
would also apply, and in greater degree, to interference with military
communications networks and/or cable communications with the added
disadvantage, except in the event of decision to resort to large-scale
electromagnetic warfare or under conditions of general war, of pre-
maturely disclosing Soviet electromagnetic warfare capabilities.

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E. Likelihood of the Kremlin Engaging in Electro-magnetic Warfare as a Positive Program for Conducting the Cold War.

31. Evidence of Soviet intentions to use electromagnetic warfare for purposes other than countering Western efforts to reach Soviet Bloc populations by radio is so far inconclusive. There are, however, a number of possible Soviet cold war objectives for which electromagnetic means might well be employed.

32. One major cold war objective of the USSR is the promotion of disunity and dissension among the nations of the free world. As noted above, the Kremlin might hope to promote some degree of such dissension by such measures as jamming Western domestic broadcasts or civil radio communications if its action could be plausibly represented as a logical consequence of allegedly similar Western action. Such action, even if ostensibly in retaliation for Western broadcasting, might thus well be taken with the primary motive of promoting dissension in the Western camp, or with both motives at once.

33. Similarly any incident which seems to represent a Western, and particularly a US, act of aggression against the USSR or its satellites can be used to create the impression of US recklessness or deliberate provocation on the part of the US, inviting general war. A number of recent incidents involving attacks on Western aircraft allegedly violating Soviet or Satellite territory and attacking Soviet Bloc planes have been so represented in Bloc propaganda. Electromagnetic measures within Soviet capabilities could be used in an effort to decoy Western aircraft over Soviet or Satellite territory to provide additional incidents of this

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nature for appropriate exploitation. Similar measures might also be used to counter specific Western actions, e.g. flights of Western patrol or reconnaissance aircraft in the vicinity of Soviet or satellite frontiers or a possible future Berlin airlift.

34. The Kremlin will in all probability continue the use of radio techniques currently in use to disseminate gray propaganda, and may well expand such measures for the conduct of gray or black propaganda wherever it may find such a course useful. The principal limiting factor under conditions short of a drastic intensification of the cold war or the outbreak of general war would appear to be the danger of political backfire in the event of too frequent, obvious, or easily exposed use of such means.

35. Soviet resort to all out electromagnetic warfare would seem highly unlikely except under conditions of general war or such a drastic intensification of cold war tensions that general war appeared imminent. It would almost certainly not be initiated so long as the Kremlin attached any value to an appearance of reasonableness on its part. The principal other deterring factor, aside from the probability of retaliation, would be the disadvantage of premature disclosure of Soviet capabilities. In the event of general war, however, the only limitation on Soviet use of electromagnetic measures would be the Kremlin's estimate of its own capabilities vis-a-vis the West and the relative importance of the objectives to be PURSUED.

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